

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HEW-04 OES-06 INT-05 EB-07 COME-00 /033 W

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R 161013Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1707

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETAP, ETRD, TBIO, BPRO, BG, US

SUBJECT: BDG INTEREST IN EXPORTING PRIMATES

REF: STATE 196115

1. ECON COUNSELOR PASSED CONTENTS REFTEL TO FORESTS SECRETARY AUGUST 10, AND LATTER REITERATED BDG REQUEST FOR EARLY ARRIVAL OF NIH REPRESENTATIVE, WITH FOLLOWING ARGUMENT.

2. THE BANGLADESH WILDLIFE (PRESERVATION) ORDER, 1973 (P.O. NO. 23) BANS THE KILLING OR CAPTURE OF ENDANGERED SPECIES AND OTHER ANIMALS BUT PERMITS THE FOREST DEPARTMENT TO RELAX THE BAN FROM TIME TO TIME IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND (AS RECENTLY AMENDED) QUOTE FOR MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC PURPOSES UNQUOTE. THE 1976/77 EXPORT POLICY, ANNOUNCED JULY 1, PERMITS THE EXPORT OF 5,000 RHESUS MONKEYS. HOWEVER, QUOTE ALL KINDS OF PEOPLE UNQUOTE WERE NOW COMING TO APPLY FOR LICENSES WITH LETTERS OF CREDIT QUOTING PRICES RANGING FROM EIGHT TO FORTY-SIX DOLLARS PER RHESUS MONKEY, THE FORESTS SECRETARY SAID. HE FEARS THAT IF THE EXPERIENCE WITH THIS TEMPORARY RELAXATION OF THE EXPORT BAN IS UNSATISFACTORY (IN TERMS OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE MANIPULATION AND ILLEGAL SHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS AS WELL AS DEPLETION OF ANIMAL POPULATION, THEN THE BDG MAY WELL STOP ALL SUCH EXPORTS AGAIN.

3. WHILE THIS APPEAL TO THE NIH IS ADMITTEDLY BELATED, WHAT FORESTS SECRETARY NEEDS IS PROMPT HELP IN BEGINNING AN ORDERLY PROCESS OF REGULATING TRAPPING AND EXPORTS. THE FIRST STEP IS TO TAKE A POPULATION CENSUS, FOLLOWED BY ADDITIONAL STEPS TO ENABLE BANGLADESH

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TO BECOME A REGULAR, LONG-TERM SUPPLIER OF SUCH MONKEYS TO REPUTABLE

SCIENTIFIC AND MEDICAL RESEARCH BODIES. THE SECRETARY WOULD LIKE ALSO TO GET ADVICE ON THE POSSIBLE USE OF SOME FOREST LAND, PLANTED WITH FRUIT TREES, AS COMMERCIAL BREEDING GROUNDS, PERHAPS ON A JOINT VENTURE BASIS WITH A U.S. FIRM OR LABORATORY. SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT WOULD ENABLE THE BDG TO ENTER WITH CONFIDENCE INTO A LONG-TERM CONTRACT WITH NIH, BOOST EXPORTS, AND AVOID THE PRESENT SITUATION WHERE UNSCRUPULOUS TRADERS ARE LIKELY TO NECESSITATE A RETURN TO COMPLETE EXPORT BAN.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS BEGINNING TO TAKE ON THE COLORATION OF A TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECT. THE FORESTS SECRETARY'S CONCERNS ARE REAL ENOUGH, HOWEVER. WHAT TRADERS TELL US IS THAT HAVING OBTAINED PERMISSION TO EXPORT, SAY, 100 MONKEYS, THEY CROWD THE CAGES AND ACTUALLY EXPORT 125 OR 150. ASIDE FROM SPCA CONCERNS, THIS INVOLVES CONTRAVENTION OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE REGULATIONS. NIH CAN HARDLY ENFORCE BDG REGULATIONS, BUT IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE PROMPT PRESENCE OF AN NIH OFFICIAL WOULD GREATLY STRENGTHEN THE FORESTS SECRETARY'S HAND IN DEALING WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION AND INCREASE THE PROBABILITY THAT AN AGREEMENT CAN BE REACHED WITH THE NIH. ALTERNATIVELY, PERHAPS NIH COULD SUGGEST REPUTABLE COMMERCIAL FIRMS WHICH COULD OFFER THE EXPERTISE THE FORESTS SECRETARY SEEKS.
BOSTER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ENDANGERED SPECIES, SPECIES PROTECTION, WILD LIFE, EXPORT CONTROLS, FUR BEARING ANIMALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DACCA04225
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760314-1126
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760851/aaaabscs.tel
Line Count: 84
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 196115
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 07 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <07 JUN 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <04 OCT 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BDG INTEREST IN EXPORTING PRIMATES
TAGS: EPAP, ETRD, TBIO, BPRO, BG, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006